

DBHDS/Division of Developmental Services

Appeals Process for the SIS®

What is the Supports Intensity Scale® (SIS®)?

The Supports Intensity Scale® (SIS®) is a standardized and norm-referenced assessment which was developed in 2004 by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD). This assessment has been tested nationwide to ensure validity and reliability. More information can be found on the AAIDD web site: www.aaid.org.

The Supports Intensity Scale® (SIS) is a support needs assessment, which gathers information through a face-to-face interview with the individual and other people who work with the individual or see them on a daily basis and know the individual well. The people who answer interview questions are called “Respondents.” A trained Interviewer collects information from respondents and/or the individual on the many areas in community living. The interview questions focus on the supports an individual needs if they were to do these activities. A copy of the long form report is sent to providers/families/individuals within 10 business days of completion by the Support Coordinator/Case Manager. Documentation should be kept on when the information was sent to which providers in case of an appeal.

Who Conducts the SIS® in Virginia and how often?

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), a federal government agency, require that a consistent method be used for all individuals across the state to assess the need for services in Home and Community Based Services (HCBS). The DBHDS (Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services) Division of Developmental Services will designate a SIS® Interviewer/Assessor who is a recognized by AAIDD and who is responsible for completing an Adult SIS® or Children’s SIS® assessment for every individual within 30 days of the date of enrollment into the Intellectual Disability or Day Support Waiver. Adult SIS’s will be completed every 3 years thereafter. The Children’s SIS® is completed every 2 years. When an individual is moving from a Training Center, a current SIS® will be part of the discharge paperwork. Once the individual is living in the community for several months, it is a team decision as to whether a new SIS® needs to be completed based on any major change in long term support. The Support Coordinator/Case Manager will contact the designated scheduler and request a new SIS® be completed as appropriate.

The Support Coordinator/Case Manager is responsible for informing the individual, the individual’s guardian, people who work with the individual and family members, as appropriate, of the scheduled interview. The Support Coordinator must assure that at least two respondents who have worked with the individual regularly for at least 3 months and provide regular (daily) support services are invited to the interview. These are individuals who know the person well and who frequently observes him or her in different environments. These environments may include home, work, school, and out in the community. The individual being assessed should be encouraged and supported to attend and may also serve as a respondent. Each Interviewer/Assessor must meet the individual being assessed face-to-face.

What are the responsibilities of a respondent?

A respondent is charged with providing guidance to the individual being assessed in an effort to present honest and accurate information to the SIS[®] Interviewer/Assessor so that a clear picture of the individual's support needs are fully captured. The questions are based on the assumption that the person, if doing the activity, needs a certain type and level of support to be successful should the individual engages in the activities discussed.

What if there are concerns about how the SIS[®] was conducted?

The SIS[®] may be appealed by the individual, his/her guardian/authorized Representative, or her/his family if they feel that the standard operating procedures were not followed. A SIS[®] score is not appealable.

In order to appeal the SIS[®], the individual, his/her guardian/authorized Representative, or his/her family must submit in writing to the SIS[®] Project Coordinator for Virginia or his/her designee in the Division of Developmental Services how the SIS[®] Standard Operating Procedures were not followed.

Process for Appealing the SIS[®] Related To Standard Operating Procedures Being Followed

1. Individuals, his/her guardian/authorized representative, or family members have 30 business days from the date they received the SIS[®] to request an appeal.
2. A letter must be submitted to the SIS[®] Project Coordinator for Virginia or his/her designee. The letter should detail the specific issue/s and include a copy of the Standard Operating Procedures checklist (See page 6). The letter and supporting documentation should be mailed to the SIS[®] Project Coordinator for Virginia in the Division of Developmental Services, PO Box 1797, Richmond, Virginia 23218-1797.
3. The SIS[®] Project Coordinator for Virginia or his /her designee, who is a recognized as AAIDD Trainer, will review the request with the Support Coordinator assigned to the individual and investigate the issues. A final decision will be rendered within 60 business days from the date received by DBHDS.
4. If it is found that the Standard Operating Procedures were not followed, a new SIS[®] will be requested and scheduled and/or completed by an AAIDD recognized Interviewer within next 90 days of the decision. The new results will be entered into the online system.
5. The appeal will be denied if there is no evidence that standard operating procedures were not followed.
6. All Appeals regarding the SIS[®] process will be tracked by the SIS[®] Project Coordinator for Virginia or his/her designee.

Standard Operating Procedures for the SIS®

1. The SIS® is administered by an AAIDD recognized endorsed SIS® Interviewer/Assessor. Only an AAIDD SIS® with the Virginia supplemental questions will be utilized.
2. The SIS® assessment must be completed prior to the start of the new ISP meeting and the individual must be provided options of dates and time for the SIS® assessment to be scheduled. (Any SIS® completed for the SIS® pilot for the My Life, My Community Waiver study will be exempt from this ISP timing as appropriate.)
3. The SIS® assessment date must be confirmed with the individual and respondents 5-7 business days prior to the assessment date or earlier if requested by the team.
4. The individual being interviewed will be asked who he/she wants to participate in the SIS® interview. The individual must receive an informational flyer or an explanation about the SIS® from the support coordinator/case manager prior to being contacted by the SIS® Scheduler.
5. If an individual needs accommodations, those accommodations must be in place at the time of the interview.
6. The SIS® interviewer/Assessor must explain the SIS® process prior to starting the assessment including the role of respondents in the assessment process.
7. The SIS® interview must be face to face.
8. At least two individuals (respondents) must be present throughout the full SIS® assessment.
9. The following guidelines are in place related to respondents:
 - a. The SIS® is administered with 2 or more respondents who know the individual well and work supporting the person on a regular basis in a group setting or individually. Respondents must have known the individual at least 3 months and have had recent opportunities to observe the individual in one or more environments for substantial periods of time.
 - b. Those providing support services and the individual are always the first choice of respondents. People who may know the individual well and understand his/her support needs may be part of interview and include: parent(s), siblings, spouse, other family members, friend, neighbor, roommate, employer, Direct Support Professional staff, Support Coordinator/Case Manager (SC/CM) and other provider staff who know individual well.
 - c. If the SC/CM knows the individual well, he or she may count as one of the respondents.
 - d. Guardians/Authorized Representatives may be present if they so desire.
10. All questions must be asked and be answered in the interview process.

Standard Operating Procedures for the SIS® (cont'd)

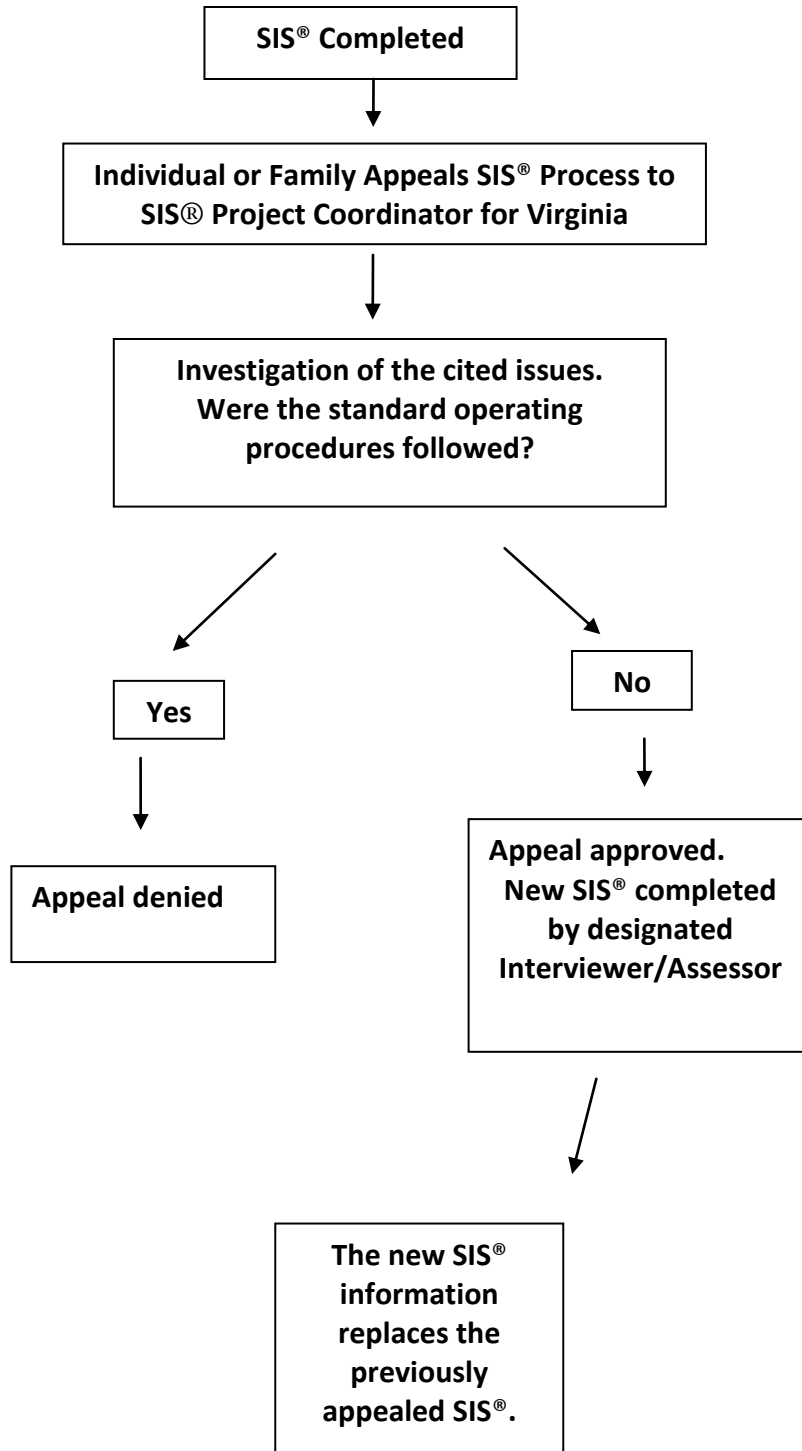
11. Answers to the questions are based on the supports that the individual would need if he or she were to engage successfully in each activity whether or not the supports are being currently provided.
12. The scores for each question are discussed and agreed to by the individuals present. An overall consensus is reached for each question by the respondents. The SIS® Interviewer/Assessor makes the final determination based on the information presented by identified respondents and shares this determination with the respondents and individuals.
13. If the Interviewer/Assessor cannot score a question and needs additional information from another respondent, the Interviewer/Assessor should discuss this with the group.
14. Individuals' exceptional medical or behavioral needs are identified in Sections 3A and 3B of the SIS®. The Supplemental section is completed based on the scores for the Exceptional Medical and Behavioral sections.
15. A SIS® Checklist form for Virginia must be completed and signed by everyone prior to leaving the meeting.

SIS® Interview Guidelines

These guidelines have been developed to assist Interviewers and the focus person in having the most beneficial time to review support needs for the planning meeting. Please ensure respondents have access to these guidelines prior to the SIS® Interview.

1. What respondents can bring to the interview.
 - An open mind and empty hands.....
 - No copies of booklets, those will be provided as needed
 - No copies of old SIS's®
 - No copies of SIS® expanded clarifications
 - No other assessments like the LOF, ICAP, etc. as they are not needed
2. There is to be no video or audio recording of the meeting unless requested by the SIS Project Coordinator for Virginia or his/her designee.
3. Cell phones, Blackberries, Droids and the like should be turned off. If respondents are waiting for an emergency call, they should ask for a break to check their messages.
4. The SIS® Interviewer will determine the score if there are differing views from different program areas.
5. The Virginia Checklist form used by Virginia should be signed by everyone at the interview immediately following the session.
6. The Interviewer/assessor must enter the results in-Online®. The hard copy of the long report will be sent to individuals, providers and family members as appropriate within 10 working days by the Support Coordinator/Case Manager or other designated person.

Appeals Process Flow Chart




Please send this checklist and a letter requesting an appeal to the SIS® Project Coordinator for Virginia in the Division of Developmental Services at the address listed below. Attach documentation of communication with the Interviewer/Assessor and CSB about issues. Mail to:

Appeals Section for the SIS®
Division of Developmental Services
PO Box 1797
Richmond, VA 23218

Individual or Family Checklist for Appeals

Name of individual who receives services: _____
 CSB/TC/CM Agency: _____

Please check the item(s) that were not followed during the SIS® interview in which you participated.

	Standard Operating Procedures for Conducting a SIS®
	At least two individuals were present who know the support needs of the focus individual (person being assessed). Appropriate individuals for a SIS® interview consist of: The individual being rated who can communicate verbally or through some other communication device, parents, siblings, other family members/guardians, friends, neighbors, roommates, employer, Direct Support Professionals, spouse or any other individual who knows the individual well and sees them at least weekly in several environments. Note: if the support coordinator knows the individual well, he/she can count as one respondent.
	The SIS® Scheduler confirmed my appointment with me at least 5-7 business days prior to the assessment unless I and/or my team requested one be given with a quick turnaround.
	I was asked if accommodations were needed for my disability and they were provided if needed.
	The Interviewer explained the SIS® process and each question prior to scoring it.
	Each question was asked and discussed in the interview.
	The final scores on each question were discussed with everyone present.
	The SIS® interview was completed face to face. (Note #1: A SIS® interview will last 2 - 3 hours on average and should be done face to face. Note #2: Phone calls might be necessary to get additional information for a SIS®, or with a support staff unexpectedly called to the service area, but the SIS® should never be completed in its entirety via telephone.)
	The SIS® interview was held prior to the ISP meeting. (Note: This may not be the case for those participating in the SIS® pilot for the <i>My Life, My Community</i> waiver study due to the need for a random sample.) For individuals new to Waiver, the SIS® must be completed within 30 days of the date of enrollment once the Virginia system returns to normal scheduling.
	If exceptional medical or behavioral needs were present, these needs were discussed and documented during the interview.

 Name/ Relationship to Individual Receiving Service Date

Contact Information

NOTE: The appeal process is available on the Division of Developmental Services web page at:
www.dbhds.virginia.gov.